

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 22-24, 40-42, and 47-86 are pending in this application, with Claims 22, 23, 40, 41, 55, 56, 83, 84, 85, and 86 being independent.

Claims 1-21, 25-39, and 43-46 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 40 and 41 have been amended and new Claims 47-86 have been added. Applicant submits that support for the amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Applicant appreciates the indication that Claims 22-24 have been allowed over the cited art. New independent Claims 55 and 56 recite similar features to those of independent Claim 22, and therefore, are also believed to be allowable. New dependent Claims 47-54 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent Claim 22. Favorable consideration is requested.

Claims 40-44 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 40 and 41 have been rewritten in independent form and therefore should be allowed. New independent Claims 83-86 recite similar features to those of independent Claim 40 or 41, and therefore, are also believed to be allowable. New dependent Claims 42 and 57-82 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the

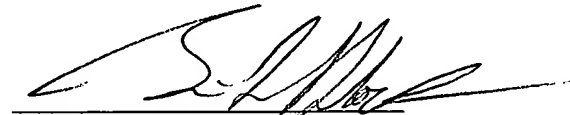
present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Favorable consideration is requested.

Claims 1-21, 25-39 and 45-46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,128,401 (Suzuki) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,393,140 (Itako). All of the rejected claims have been cancelled without prejudice.

In view of the foregoing, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 721-5427. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. L. Klock', is written over a horizontal line.

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